

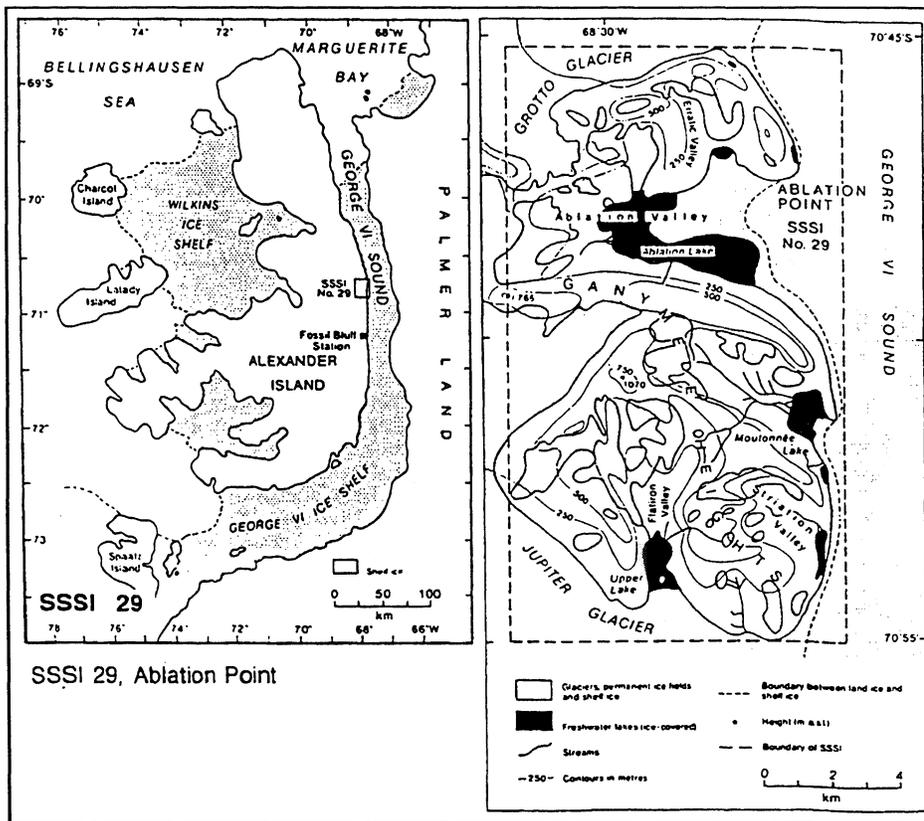
Antarctic Specially Protected Area No. 147 (Site of Special Scientific Interest No. 29)

Ablation Point-Ganymede Heights, Alexander Island

1. *Geographical location.* The Ablation Valley-Ganymede Heights massif and its valley systems (70°49'S, 68°25'W) is situated on the mid-east coast of Alexander Island overlooking the shelf ice of George VI Sound and about 120 km from open sea to the north.

2. *Management plan*

i. *Description of site.* The Site extends from lat. 70°45' to lat. 70°55' and from long. 68°40'W to the George VI Sound coastline. The largely ice-free area comprises three main and two lesser valley systems separated by often precipitous ridges and plateaux 650–760 m high. The site is bounded by Grotto Glacier to the north, Jupiter Glacier to the south and west, and George VI Sound to the east. The area extends 18 km from north to south and 10 km from east to west, rising to a maximum altitude of 1070 m.



ASPA 147
Map A and B*

- ii. *Reason for designation.* The Site represents one of the largest ablation areas in West Antarctica. It has a complex geology, the main rock types being conglomerates, arkosic sandstones and shales with subordinate pebbly mudstones and sedimentary breccias. The base of the succession is formed of a spectacular *mélange*, including large blocks of lava and agglomerate. This outcrops on the valley floors and at the base of several cliffs. It possesses a wide range of geomorphological features including raised beaches, moraine systems and patterned ground. There are several permanently frozen freshwater lakes and many ice-free ponds supporting a diverse flora (including aquatic bryophytes) and fauna. There are a few major streams and many smaller ones in summer. The vegetation is generally sparse, with a unique moss and liverwort-dominated community type being restricted to 'oases' where water issues from otherwise dry barren hillsides. The terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems are vulnerable to human impact and therefore merit protection from uncontrolled human presence.
- iii. *Outline of research.* Several detailed geological, geomorphological, glaciological and limnological studies have been made by British Antarctic Survey scientists within the Site and it is proposed to undertake terrestrial ecological research throughout the area.
- iv. *Date of expiry of designation.* 31 December 1999
- v. *Access points.* None specified, but the most convenient point is by landing on Ablation Lake. Access is not possible from the shelf ice of George VI Sound because of the dangerous and variable condition of the pressure ice.
- vi. *Pedestrian and vehicular routes.* Vehicles may be used on land with the utmost care, avoiding areas of vegetation, patterned ground and streams whenever possible. Pedestrians should avoid, as far as possible, areas of oasis vegetation, patterned ground, streams and lake margins.
- vii. *Other kinds of scientific investigations which would not cause harmful interference.* None specified.
- viii. *Scientific sampling.* Scientific sampling within the Site should be minimal and restricted to that which can be accomplished as far as possible without introducing new organisms, including micro-organisms, and without disturbing the environment.
- ix. *Other restraints.* All materials, including combustibles, introduced into the Site should be removed after each visit. Solid human waste should be disposed of into the sea through tide cracks.